

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Wyoming	
COUNTY: Uinta	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 69-04-49-0003	DATE 4/16/69

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Fort Bridger

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
SW $\frac{1}{2}$  SW $\frac{1}{2}$ , Section 33, T. 16 N. R. 115 W. 6th P.M.

CITY OR TOWN:  
Fort Bridger

STATE: Wyoming CODE: 49 COUNTY: Uinta CODE: 041

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/>	Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Occupied <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>
Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/>	Private <input type="checkbox"/>	Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/>	Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Object <input type="checkbox"/>	Both <input type="checkbox"/>	Preservation work in progress <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/>
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/>	Government <input type="checkbox"/>	Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Comments <input type="checkbox"/>
Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	Industrial <input type="checkbox"/>	Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Military <input type="checkbox"/>	Religious <input type="checkbox"/>	State Historic Site <input type="checkbox"/>
Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/>	Museum <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Scientific <input type="checkbox"/>	

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNERS NAME:  
State of Wyoming, administered by the Wyoming Recreation Commission.

STREET AND NUMBER:  
604 East 25th Street

CITY OR TOWN: Cheyenne STATE: Wyoming CODE: 49

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
Wyoming Recreation Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:  
604 East 25th Street

CITY OR TOWN: Cheyenne STATE: Wyoming CODE: 49

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 37.3

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Wyoming Recreation Commission, Survey of Historic Sites, Markers and Mon.

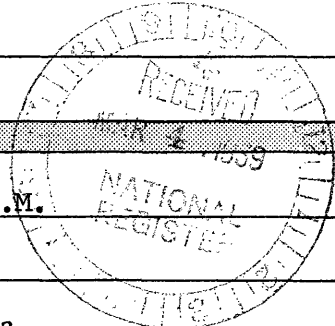
DATE OF SURVEY: Summer - Fall 1967 Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Wyoming Recreation Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:  
604 East 25th Street

CITY OR TOWN: Cheyenne STATE: Wyoming CODE: 49

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



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COUNTY: Uinta  
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**7. DESCRIPTION**

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Fair <input type="checkbox"/>	Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/>	Ruins <input type="checkbox"/>	Unexposed <input type="checkbox"/>
INTEGRITY	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	Altered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Unaltered <input type="checkbox"/>	Moved <input type="checkbox"/>		Original Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Existing Fort Bridger structures on State property include a barracks (now used as a museum), commissary building, old guard house, new guard house, sentry box, officers' quarters, mess hall, post trader's store, Pony Express stables, freight wagon shed, milk house, school house, wash house, cemetery and a portion of the "Mormon Wall." All state owned buildings are in a state of good repair and/or restoration with the exception of the commissary building and the guard house. These latter two structures are in fair condition. Only foundations exist where other Fort buildings originally stood.

The Fort grounds are properly maintained and are consistent with their historical character except for a heavy overgrowth of vegetation and trees.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Pre-Columbian <input type="checkbox"/>	16th Century <input type="checkbox"/>	18th Century <input type="checkbox"/>	20th Century <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
15th Century <input type="checkbox"/>	17th Century <input type="checkbox"/>	19th Century <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

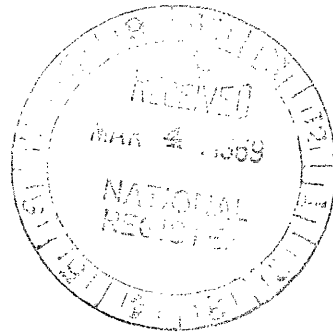
Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/>	Education <input type="checkbox"/>	Political <input type="checkbox"/>	Urban Planning <input type="checkbox"/>
Prehistoric <input type="checkbox"/>	Engineering <input type="checkbox"/>	Religion/Philosophy <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Historic <input type="checkbox"/>	Industry <input type="checkbox"/>	Science <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Overland migration</u>
Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/>	Invention <input type="checkbox"/>	Sculpture <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Art <input type="checkbox"/>	Landscape <input type="checkbox"/>	Social/Humanitarian <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Commerce <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Architecture <input type="checkbox"/>	Theater <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Communications <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Literature <input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	_____
Conservation <input type="checkbox"/>	Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		_____
	Music <input type="checkbox"/>		_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

Fort Bridger is of national significance representing the closing of the Rocky Mountain fur trade, the trans-Mississippi overland migration, transcontinental transportation and communication, United States military and Indian affairs, and to some degree the Cattleman's frontier and settlement.

See also attached addendum.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Ellison, Robert Spurrier, A Brief History of Fort Bridger, Wyoming. (Privately published, 1931.)  
 Alter, J. Cecil, Jim Bridger (Norman, Oklahoma, University of Oklahoma Press, 1962, Revised Edition).  
 Larson, T. A., History of Wyoming (Lincoln, Nebraska, University of Nebraska Press, 1965).

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN ONE ACRE		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
 Bill Barnhart, Assistant Historian

ORGANIZATION: Wyoming Recreation Commission      DATE: Feb. 26, 1969

STREET AND NUMBER:  
 604 East 25th Street

CITY OR TOWN: Cheyenne      STATE: Wyoming 82001      CODE: 49

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name: Charles R. Rodermel  
 Charles R. Rodermel

Title: State Liaison Officer

Date: February 26, 1969

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Ernest Allen Connolly  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: APR 16 1969

ATTEST:

William J. Montoya  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: APR 16 1969

NO  
 ATM  
 OD  
 SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Summary: Fort Bridger's history is long and varied spanning every major phase of Western frontier development except the fur trade. Along the emigrant trails it was second in importance only to Fort Laramie. Its establishment, early operation and namesake relates to one of the most famous of all the early trappers and explorers: James Bridger.

The decline of the fur trade in the Rocky Mountains in the late 1830's forced the "mountain men" who remained on the frontier to seek new occupations. Jim Bridger established a small trading post in the valley of the Black's Fork of the Green River and formed a partnership with Louis Vasquez. Erected in 1842, the post was open for business early in 1843.

Bridger's proposed intention was to establish trade with the friendly Indians in the neighborhood and with the emigrants who passed the fort on their way west. Because of a convenient location on the Overland Route, Fort Bridger became second in importance only to Fort Laramie as a resupply and outfitting point for travelers between the Missouri River and the Pacific Coast. For a decade after establishment the fort was visited by numerous parties of Indians, emigrants, gold seekers, adventurers, explorers, and the militarily significant Stansbury Expedition when it passed through in 1849. A majority of the "plains travelers" during this period sooner or later stopped at Fort Bridger.

A dispute over the ownership of the Fort developed in 1853. The Mormons, who had settled the valley of the Salt Lake in 1847, claimed they had purchased the fort for \$6,000, paid in gold coin. Bridger denied such a transaction had ever occurred. In the fall of 1853, two parties of Mormons sent out from Salt Lake City came to the vicinity, established

Fort Supply and took over Fort Bridger. The two forts were then used to aid converts to the church as they traveled over the trail to Salt Lake City; to establish trade with the other emigrants; and to check the threat of Indian hostilities the Mormons claimed Bridger was promoting.

Friction developed between the Mormons and the Federal Government in the late 1850's. President Buchanan dispatched United States troops to the area in 1857 precipitating the so-called "Mormon War". Upon the approach of "Johnston's Army", the Mormons deserted and burned both Fort Bridger and Fort Supply, Colonel A. S. Johnston, later famous as a Confederate general, immediately took over the sites and declared Fort Bridger to be a military reservation. In 1858 it was officially made a military post and a building program started.

The early 1860's were eventful years at Fort Bridger. In addition to military activities the fort served as a major station for the Pony Express, the Overland Stage Line and the trans-continental telegraph. Troops from the fort patrolled the trails and frequently provided escort and protection when constant Indian depredations made travel hazardous. Regular Union troops arriving at Fort Bridger after the Civil War found it in a state of poor repair. A renewed building program started soon afterwards.

Two events created new excitement around Fort Bridger in 1867. Northeast of the fort, around the South Pass and Sweetwater region, "gold fever" had precipitated a lively "boom". About the same time the construction of the Union Pacific Railroad proceeded along a route just north of the Fort. Fort Bridger became an important supply point and troops again provided travelers and workers protection from hostile Indian harassment.

Indian peace treaties signed at Fort Bridger proved quite successful. A treaty signed at the fort on July 2, 1863, attained the Shoshonis promise not to molest whites traveling along the trails in return for \$10,000 in trade goods each year for twenty years. Five years and one day later, on July 3, 1868, another treaty was signed with Washakie's Shoshonis at Fort Bridger. The tribe, in treaty with General C. C. Augur representing the Indian Peace Commissioner, was given a large reservation east of the Wind River Mountains. The Shoshonis, with Chief Washakie's leadership and Jim Bridger's advice, subsequently acquired a reputation as being trustworthy friends of the white man.

A period of relative peace existed in the valley of Black's Fork during the 1870's despite the "Indian Wars" sweeping through the northern Plains. Though strategically located, Fort Bridger never served as the base for any of the major military expeditions. However, a number of troops stationed at the fort were re-assigned for fighting purposes. The post was abandoned in 1878 but reactivated in 1880. Through the 1880's the military erected additional buildings and barracks and made many general improvements. But with the Indians on reservations and the passing of the frontier, posts like Fort Bridger were no longer needed. The order came down and on October 1, 1890, the military permanently abandoned Fort Bridger.

The military departed but many early residents remained to make the Fort and the valley their home. Most prominent was the family of Judge W. A. Carter. Carter first came to the vicinity with the army during the "Mormon War" and received an appointment as Fort Bridger's first post trader. Upon his death in 1881 he had amassed a considerable

fortune through a variety of business enterprises. His livestock operation was one of the largest of its time in Wyoming. So large, in fact, that it was not confined to the southwestern section of the state as Carter had cattle ranging as far as the Montana line.

Sentiment developed in the 1920's among many Wyoming citizens who wished Fort Bridger preserved in light of the significant role it played in the development of the Rocky Mountain West. As a result the State of Wyoming acquired the site along with the few remaining buildings in 1928. The acquisition was made possible through the efforts of the Historical Landmark Commission of Wyoming and other interested parties. Since that time continuing efforts have saved the remains of the Fort from falling into oblivion.

Today Fort Bridger is a State Historic Site under the jurisdiction of the Wyoming Recreation Commission. The grounds and remaining buildings are properly maintained and some restoration has been accomplished. A development program will continue as funds allow. The site is open year round and is easily accessible to visitors traveling U. S. Highway 30 between Evanston and Green River. Visitation numbers rival those of Fort Laramie National Historic Site and the State Museum in Cheyenne.

As the new Interstate Highway I-80 nears completion just north of Fort Bridger a new era appears on the horizon. Once again Fort Bridger finds itself located in the mainstream of American transcontinental movement. Its original establishment at a wisely chosen spot along a natural thoroughfare has kept it active in spite of changing conditions. Fort Bridger has survived the inroads of time to host a whole new generation of American travelers.



## FORT BRIDGER

County: Uinta County.

Location: Fort Bridger is located on Black's Fork of the Green River adjacent to the community of Fort Bridger, Wyoming.

Ownership: State of Wyoming. (Portions of the original fort grounds and some original buildings outside the state owned area are in private ownership.)

Interest Phase: Fort Bridger is of national significance representing the closing of the Rocky Mountain fur trade, the Trans-Mississippi overland migration, trans-continental transportation and communication, United States military and Indian affairs, and to some degree the cattleman's frontier and settlement.

Sources:

Ellison, Robert Spurner. A Brief History of Fort Bridger, Wyoming, 1931.

Alter, J. Cecil, Jim Bridger. (Rev. Ed.), University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma, 1962.

Larson, T. A. History of Wyoming. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, Nebraska, 1965.

Prepared By: Bill Barnhart

F O R T B R I D G E R

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

That fractional part of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$  SW $\frac{1}{4}$  of section 33, T. 16N. R. 115 W. of 6th P.M. Particularly described as follows:

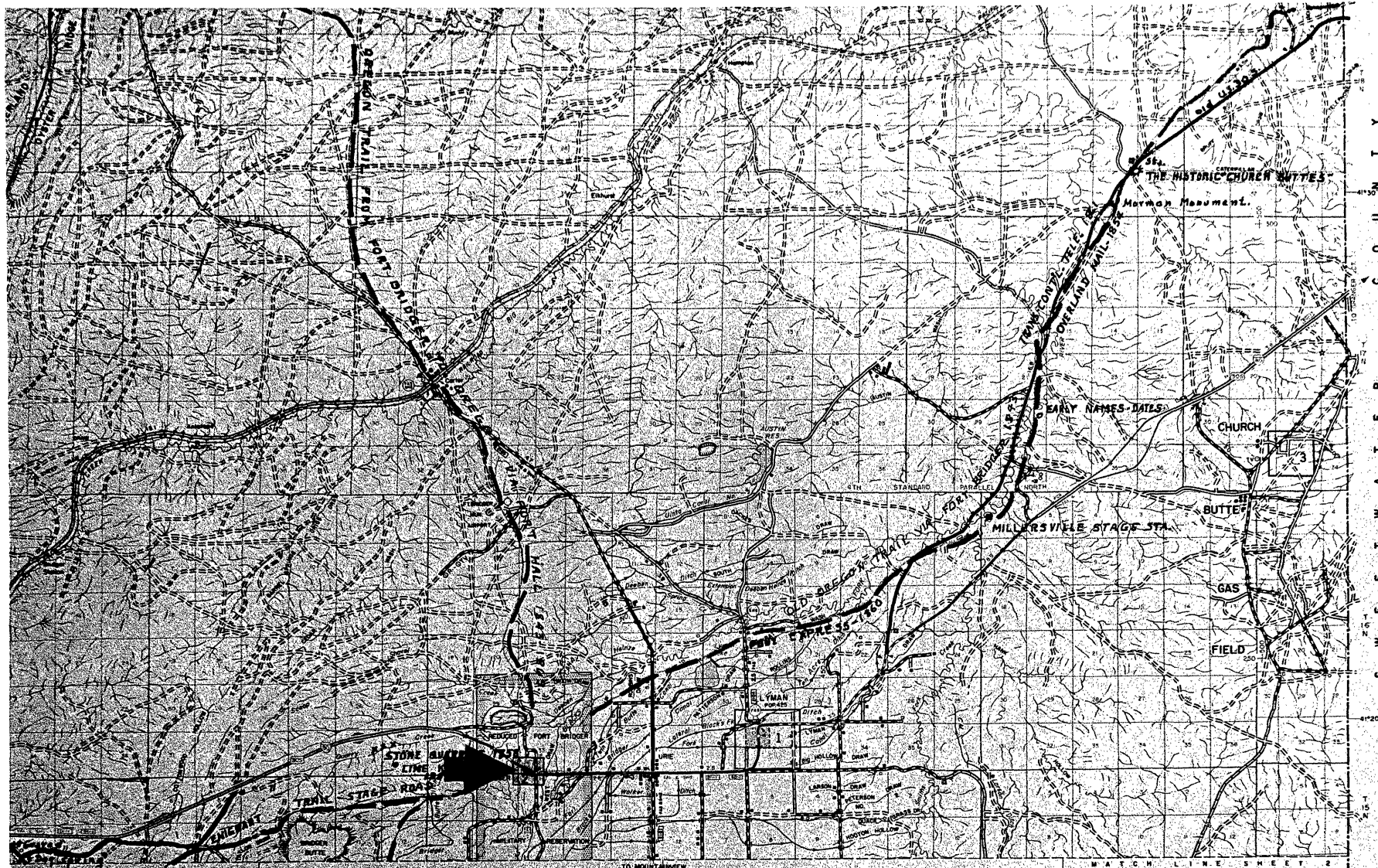
Beginning at the SW corner of section 33, T. 16 N.R. 115W. of 6th P.M.; thence, N.0 $^{\circ}$  29'30" W., along the section line, 1321.0 ft. to quarter quarter corner; thence, S. 89 $^{\circ}$  50' E. 1323.5 ft. to quarter quarter corner. Thence, S. 0 $^{\circ}$  10' E. 592.17 ft.; thence, N. 88 $^{\circ}$  00'W. 63.9 ft. thence, S. 14 $^{\circ}$  54'W. 749.9 ft. to the township line; thence, S. 89 $^{\circ}$  52'W., along the township line 1057.2 ft. to the point of beginning.

Excepting:

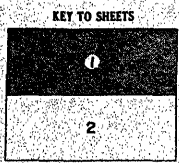
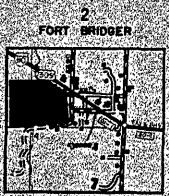
That portion of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$  SW $\frac{1}{4}$  of section 33, T. 16N., R. 115W. of 6th P.M. Particularly described as follows:

Beginning at a point located N.0 $^{\circ}$  32' 30" W. 1321.0 ft. and S.89 $^{\circ}$  53' E. 471.2 ft. From the SW corner of section 33, T. 16N. R. 115W. of 6th P.M.; Running thence, S. 59 $^{\circ}$  33' E. 378.2 ft. to the point of ending of a 0 $^{\circ}$  04' circular curve to the right, the radius of which is 86,008.7 ft.; thence, along said curve through a central angle of 0 $^{\circ}$  18' a distance of 450.0 ft. to the point of beginning of said curve; thence, S. 59 $^{\circ}$  51' E. 162.0 ft. Thence, N. 0 $^{\circ}$  18' E. 139.8 ft.; thence, N. 59 $^{\circ}$  33' W. 710.4 ft.; thence, N. 89 $^{\circ}$  53' W.241.7 ft. to the point of beginning.

<p>Identification Code</p>									
<p>United States of America NATIONAL REGISTER INVENTORY Department of the Interior</p>	<p>1. NAME (common and historic)  Fort Bridger</p>								
<p>2. INVENTORIED BY: <small>REG. NO. 85</small>  Individual: Bill Barnhart  Organization: Wyoming Recreation Commission 604 East 25th Street Cheyenne, Wyoming 82001  Date: October 25, 1968</p>	<p>3. STATE Wyoming COUNTY Uinta TOWN STREET &amp; NO.  <u>MAP COORDINATES</u> SW<math>\frac{1}{4}</math> SW<math>\frac{1}{4}</math> Sec. 33 ; T 16 N R 115 W; of 6th P.M. or Latitude 41 deg. 19.0 min. and Longitude 110 deg. 23.3 min.</p>								
<p>4. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS (Federal, State, County, Local)</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td><u>Fort Bridger State Historic</u></td> <td>_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>name</td> <td>date</td> </tr> <tr> <td><u>Site</u></td> <td>_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> </tr> </table>	<u>Fort Bridger State Historic</u>	_____	name	date	<u>Site</u>	_____	_____	_____	<p>5. PRESENT OWNER</p> <p>Name &amp; Address: State of Wyoming. Administered by the Wyoming Recreation Commission 604 East 25th Street Cheyenne, Wyoming 82001</p>
<u>Fort Bridger State Historic</u>	_____								
name	date								
<u>Site</u>	_____								
_____	_____								
<p>6. LOCATION MAP</p> <p>General Highway Map Wyoming Highway Department</p> <p>Uinta County, Wyoming 1963 Sheet 1 of 2 sheets</p> <p>See addendum</p>									
<p>7. PHOTOGRAPH</p> <p>See addendum</p>	<p>Present Use: State Historic Site</p> <p>Zoning: None</p> <p>Accessible to Public: Yes <u>X</u> No _____</p>								



S W E E T W A T E R C O U N T Y



**GENERAL HIGHWAY MAP**  
**UINTA**  
**COUNTY**  
**WYOMING**

PREPARED BY THE  
 WYOMING HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT  
 PLANNING AND RESEARCH DIVISION

Population Uinta County, 1960 Census